

**Remarks of First Lady Jessica Doyle
Governor's Summit on After-School Programs
Tuesday, February 7, 2006**

It has been very exciting to participate in this outstanding summit on Afterschool Programs. I am really amazed at the dedication to excellence of programs represented here and the high level of expertise that we have gathered at this summit. A very special thanks to our keynote speakers, Wynn Watkins of the JC Penney Fund and Lynn Mitchell of Corporate Voices for Working Families. We are grateful for your guidance and important national perspectives.

As a parent, I was always extremely grateful for afterschool programs. They provided our sons with constructive activities, friendships, and positive relationships with wonderful adults. I could continue my own work with great peace of mind knowing my kids were well-taken care of. Every working parent deserves this option. Now, thanks to a generous grant from the Chas. Stuart Mott Foundation and the support of the Afterschool Network, Wisconsin intends to make top quality Afterschool options available to every student in the state.

As an educator, I have long seen the far-reaching results of quality afterschool programs. They keep students safe and productive during one of the most difficult times of the day--when some students are tired, some are bored, some are wild--and just then, when adult direction and support are really needed, most parents are working and homes are empty. At Afterschool, kids get one-on-one time with caring adults, help with homework, or someone to listen after a very intense day. They find friends, fun, and gain useful new skills.

Today I redoubled my commitment as I heard about new and creative ways to link afterschool with the school day to reinforce and extend classroom learning. (One school told me how they connect units of study--when the classrooms are studying the civil war, for example, the Afterschool programs are doing the music and the games of civil war times.)

We also heard today how Afterschool programs are building the habits necessary for classroom and workplace success--like responsibility, punctuality, team play, and leadership. Most programs start with the responsibility of homework, and then move on to recreation, arts, or activities. Whether they call it study table or homework club, the message is to do your work first.

Most programs include communication and involvement with parents, and many businesses and organizations have contributed money and volunteers to afterschool. (In Madison, CUNA has taken the lead in supplying support and volunteers to middle school programs. At Sherman Middle School, Heritage Credit Union members form a cadre of math tutors. Students with a less than strong background can make great strides by working afterschool with a volunteer.)

We know that afterschool programs are a sound investment in our youth, and that the Afterschool Network exists to help us identify best practices, coordinate our needs, and maximize our efforts. I am greatly encouraged by many exemplary programs in our state, some which I have been able to visit as part of the Community Connections

initiative. I am inspired by the success stories of our presenters. Yet we know we must do more.

We hear much talk and read many reports about the achievement gap. Research tells us that the students--regardless of race or income level--, who are not behind, are the students who are very involved in their schools. Afterschool programs lead to a greater engagement in all school activities, produce a more positive outlook toward school, and build that needed student self-esteem.

We know what works and how to work together, and we know we need more adults to give time to kids. Soon you will receive your commitment cards, and I encourage you to respond right away, while the excitement reigns and your motivation is high. I urge you to get involved and support the Network and your local afterschool programs in whatever way you can.

In closing, please join the governor and me in thanking, once again, all those people who worked so hard to put this worthwhile summit together.

- The Wisconsin Afterschool Network--including Linda Kleinschmidt (Wis. Council on Children and Families) and Kathi Vos (UW-Extension)
- DPI--especially Steve Fernan, Kristin Matakis, and Doug White
- The Nat'l. Governors Association and the Charles Stuart Mott Foundation for its financial support and focus on this issue
- Our speakers, Gallery Walk presenters, and students from Milwaukee High School of the Arts.

Thank you all for being here--and I look forward to continued progress for afterschool programs.